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Letter dated 18 April 2000 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 1291 (2000) of 24 February 2000 concerning the expansion of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). In that paragraph, the Council expressed serious concern at reports of the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including in violation of the sovereignty of that country, called for an end to such activities, expressed its intention to consider the matter further and requested me to report to the Council within 90 days on ways to achieve this goal.

The Security Council may wish to consider creating a panel of experts, perhaps for a six-month period, to undertake a preliminary investigation into the situation and to revert to the Council thereafter with its recommendations. The panel would be financed from the regular budget of the United Nations. It would thus be organizationally separate from MONUC, although it could request logistical support from the Mission while travelling within the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is envisaged that the panel would submit a preliminary report after three months and a final report, with recommendations, at the end of its mandate.

The members of the panel should be selected on the basis of their expertise in matters connected with natural resources and their knowledge of the subregion and the political, military and economic situation there. I would propose that the panel be based at the United Nations Office in Nairobi.

I should be grateful if you would bring this matter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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